

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 2, 3, and 5 contain allowable subject matter. Accordingly, independent claim 1 has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 2, which has been cancelled.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. Claim 22 is new. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Claims 1 and 22 are independent. Claim 2 has been cancelled. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1, 4, and 6-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by JP 10-268306 (hereinafter "Takei"). Independent claim 1 has been amended in this reply. In view of these amendments, this rejection is now moot.

Specifically, claim 2 has been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. The limitations of claim 2 have been incorporated into independent claims 1. Thus, claim 1 is now patentable over Takei. Dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, new claim 22 has similar limitations as claim 2. Accordingly, new claim 22 is patentable over Takei.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Takei in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,233,031 (hereinafter "Ishitaka"). Independent claim 1 has been amended in this reply. In view of these amendments, this rejection is now moot.

Specifically, claim 2 has been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. The limitations of claim 2 have been incorporated into independent claim 1. Thus, claim 1 is now patentable over Takei in view of Ishitaka. Dependent claim 14 is allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, new claim 22 has similar limitations as claim 2. Accordingly, new claim 22 is patentable over Takei in view of Ishitaka.

Claims 15-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Takei in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,538,711 (hereinafter "Funahata"). Independent claim 1 has been amended in this reply. In view of these amendments, this rejection is now moot.

Specifically, claim 2 has been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. The limitations of claim 2 have been incorporated into independent claims 1. Thus, claim 1 is now patentable over Takei in view of Funahata. Dependent claims 15-21 are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, new claim 22 has similar limitations as claim 2. Accordingly, new claim 22 is patentable over Takei in view of Funahata.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply to be fully responsive to all outstanding issues and place this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 15115.015001).

Date: 7/26/03

Respectfully submitted,



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